Music Theory

For The Modern Rockin' Metalhead

Write Better Songs, Right Now!

SAMPLE CHAPTERS

Kyle Morrison Lovely

B.A – Music and Sound Recording

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for

All who seek knowledge with an open mind…

PREFEACE

WHY DO I NEED THIS?

If you are reading this book, chances are that you play in a band. If you play in a band, chances are that you compose original music. If you compose original music, chances are that you fall into the 99.8 percentile of bands that have not received any sort of formal recognition for their music. Why are other bands getting attention? Why do your songs fall short? What do they know that you don't?

MUSIC THEORY.

The art of Music Theory is the primary tool of successful musicians and holds the key to an in depth understanding of how music is composed, arranged, and understood. In my years as a professional in the music business, I found that most bands that were trying to "make it" had little or no knowledge of music theory. For some reason, there are a large number of aspiring musicians out there who think they don't have to know anything about music in order to be successful in the music business. Most bands fall into this category, and ultimately made it easier for my band to gracefully crush our unsuspecting competitors.

Picture this: There are two competing carpenters that are building houses near each other. One carpenter wanted to start building houses right after he saw a house he liked. He had the general idea that he needed wood, nails, plumbing, and electrical to make a house function. So he immediately started building houses with the idea that it would work somehow if all of the materials were thrown together. The second carpenter saw a house he liked which inspired him to build. But, before he started the process, he learned about how a solid foundation will make the house stand strong, and how to properly wire electrical equipment and install plumbing. He read textbooks, practiced his skills, and studied with more experienced builders. He gathered as much information as he could before he even swung his hammer on his first project.

Which builder will you think will enjoy long-term success?

Which one would most likely fail right away or eventually fail?

Which one will make a better product?

Which one will be recognized for quality work?

Which one will sell more houses and have a successful career?

Without the understanding of the building blocks of music, your tower of songs will come crashing down. The people that are recognized for outstanding achievements in music have a *true* understanding of the building blocks. Professional songwriters make a killing; the top people in the industry will make $100,000 *per song*! Major record labels have no problem shelling out millions of dollars per year to people that can write hit songs for their upcoming pop stars. The bands that you love to listen to have spent hours upon hours developing their craft, studying, and practicing. They have worked hard to become masters of music, and create songs that will last forever in the pages of music history. If you truly have the desire to be recognized in the world of music, your journey should start right here with this book.

But why take advice from *me*?

Who am *I*?

I am Kyle Morrison Lovely, and I sang for the band Shattersphere for 5 years. I started the band in 2002, and went on hiatus in 2007. My band has shared the stage with some of the greatest acts in music such as Alice In Chains, Buckcherry, Mudvayne, Atreyu, Lostprophets, Hinder, 18 Visions, Powerman 5000, Orgy, Mushroomhead, Dope, All That Remains, Hed PE, Bloodsimple, Days of The New, King's X, Soulfly, and many more. My band has won numerous songwriting awards such as a 2006 Independent Music Award, the worldwide Next Hit Song contest, and placed in the 2005 International Songwriting Competition. We've also been on over 300 radio stations nationwide, licensed music to MTV, Extreme Sports DVDs, and HDTV commercials. We even wrote the theme to the video game Kaos War: Rise of the Fallen. I've played arenas, strip clubs, rock clubs, dive bars, theaters, and festivals all across the United States. I've interviewed with publications from around the world, and even took part in an online reality show called Creating Kaos. I also did some work for World Wrestling Entertainment by singing the original version of the ECW Theme: *Don't Question My*

Heart. If you'd really like to see the extent of my achievements, then check out some of the websites I have listed in the back of this book.

In short: I've walked my talk.

I graduated form The University of New Haven with a B.A. in Music and Sound Recording. My education in classical Music Theory gave me the ability to take my good songs, and transform them into something great. There is a direct correlation between my success in the music business and my knowledge of music theory. I wouldn't be anybody in this business if I didn't know this stuff. Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, along with all of the other true masters of music utilized music theory to the fullest extent. Their results are legendary, and paved the way for modern music over the past few hundred years. With the same knowledge you *can* have better songs, you *can* have more success, and you *can* get the recognition you deserve.

After thousands of years of music, the world is still starving. People are seeking new bands, new faces, and groundbreaking new music. You need to get your ideas out there, fast! This book is not designed to give you every single last piece of music information in existence. Rather, it has been carefully designed to give you the most important concepts that will allow you to write better songs, *right now*.

Thank you for taking the time to invest in your education and bring great new works of music into the world. I look forward to hearing your work!

- Kyle Morrison Lovely

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO BUILDING SCALES

--- KEY TERMS ---

Scale – A specific arrangement of notes with a distinct pattern of half steps and whole steps.

Key – A group of notes based on a particular note and scale that forms the tonal center of the music. Ex: The Key of G Major, the Key of F# Minor.

Enharmonic Spelling – The same note spelled in different ways. Ex: F# is the same note as Gb. Eb is the same note as D#, B# is the same note as C.

Every song you write has to be in a certain *key*. In other words, you need to pick a note that will be the tonal center of your song, and then decide what kind of mood to wrap around that note. For instance: I want to write a song in the key of F major. That would mean that my tonal center will be the note F, and the song will use a major *scale*.

Basically, a scale becomes a list of notes that you are able to use in composing a song. The scale of F major looks like this…

F G A Bb C D E

What does this mean? This is the list of notes I can use if I am writing a song in the key of F major. Any other notes, or alternative spellings of those notes are *incorrect*.

In order to build a scale properly, you need to follow a few rules. This will ensure that you scales have the correct notes and correct *spelling* of the notes. Using these rules, it's hard to go wrong when you are building a scale. Here they are in no particular order...

RULES FOR BUILDING SCALES

1. You must use every letter of the musical alphabet
2. All letters must be in order
3. You cannot repeat any letters except for your starting note
4. If there are sharps in the scale, then there cannot be any flats
5. If there are flats in the scale, then there cannot be any sharps

HOMEWORK *(answers are in the back of the book)*

1. Memorize the rules for building scales. These rules will be extremely important in the construction of scales.

2. Answer the following statements with True or False…

_____ The F major scale contains the note Ab.
_____ The F major scale contains the note G.
_____ The note A# is part of the F major scale.
_____ The F major scale has 6 notes.

CHAPTER 4

BUILDING MAJOR SCALES

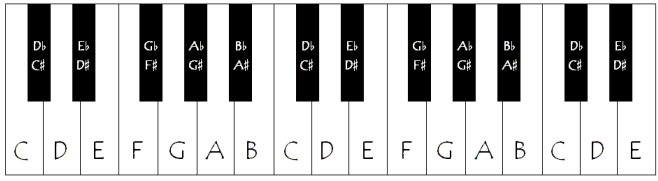
--- KEY TERMS ---

Major Scale – A joyful scale of 8 notes that has the following pattern of whole steps (W) and half steps (H) between the notes…

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	W	W	H	W	W	W	H

The *major scale* is arguably the most important scale in music. It is the most frequently used scale in music history and has even influenced other scales. Major scales can be used to write happy, joyful, and bright songs, but are also commonly used in the ever-popular ballad and love songs.

Using the introductory concepts of scales from the last chapter, let's try to build a C major scale. It definitely helps to have a piano, or a diagram of the piano in front of you while trying to do this…



The first step to writing out a scale is to determine what note to start on. In this case we've chosen to start on C. Therefore, C will be the first note in the scale. Then, by using a formula, we can figure out which notes belong in the C major scale. The formula for determining *any* major scale looks like this…

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	W	W	H	W	W	W	H

The numbers 1 – 8 will eventually represent the letters of the notes that belong in the scale. For example, in the C major scale, C will replace the number “1” because it’s the beginning note.

This formula states that the first note and the second note in the scale are separated by a whole step.

1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8
	W	W	H	W	W	W	H

Using the piano diagram as reference, we can see that a whole step up from C is D. Therefore, D is the next note in the scale, and takes the place of the number “2” in the formula.

The process repeats as you determine the rest of the notes in the scale. The formula shows that there is a whole step between the second note (D) and third note.

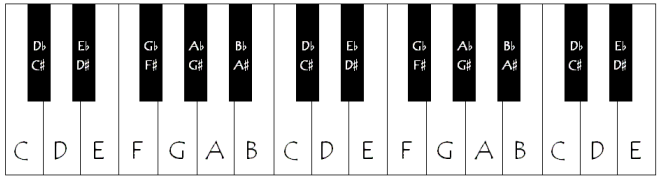
1	**2**	**3**	4	5	6	7	8
	W	**W**	H	W	W	W	H

By starting on D (the second note in the scale) and going up one whole step (skip D#, and land on E), we are able to determine that the third note in the scale is E. Now on to the fourth note…

The formula states that a half step lies between the third note and fourth note…

1	2	**3**	**4**	5	6	7	8
	W	W	**H**	W	W	W	H

If we look closely at our piano here, we see that there is no black key between E and F…



Therefore, the distance between E and F is a *half step*. This would mean that the fourth note in the C major scale is an F. Now for the fifth note…

The formula indicates that the distance between the fourth and fifth note is a whole step…

1	2	3	**4**	**5**	6	7	8
	W	W	H	**W**	W	W	H

If the fourth note is F, then a whole step up from F would bring us to a G. G is the fifth note in the C major scale. I know I'm moving rather quickly, but I will give you plenty of homework to solidify your knowledge for this chapter! Let's take a look at what the sixth note in the scale is…

It looks like the distance between our fifth and sixth note is yet another whole step…

1	2	3	4	**5**	**6**	7	8
	W	W	H	W	**W**	W	H

Our fifth note is G, and one whole step up from G is A. That would make A the sixth note in the scale. Onwards to discover the seventh note in the scale…

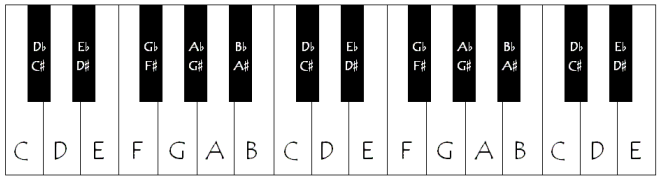
1	2	3	4	5	**6**	**7**	8
	W	W	H	W	W	**W**	H

Between the sixth note and seventh note in the scale lies our final whole step. The sixth note is A, so if we go up one whole step from there, we land on B. This makes B the seventh note in the C major scale. Only one more note to complete our scale…

The eighth and final note in our scale lies one half step up from the seventh note in the scale…

1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	**8**
	W	W	H	W	W	W	**H**

The seventh note in our scale is B, and if we double-check our piano again, we find that there is no black key in between B and C…



Therefore, our last note in the scale will be C, the same note we started on. The eighth note in the scale should *always* be the note you started on. If it isn't, go back and double-check your work. So, the complete C major scale will look like this…

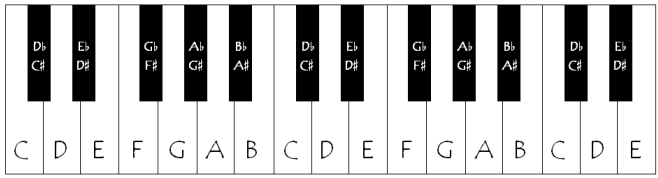
C D E F G A B C

This is the series of notes you are allowed to use when composing in the key of C major. All right! Whew, no black keys! We might have gotten away easy this time, but I assure you that the C major scale is the *only* major scale with out any sharps or flats. Always, always double check your work and see if your scale follows our checklist we made earlier…

1. You must use every letter of the musical alphabet √
2. All letters must be in order √
3. You cannot repeat any letters except for your starting note √
4. If there are sharps in the scale, then there cannot be any flats √
5. If there are flats in the scale, then there cannot be any sharps √

> **What you've accomplished**: You have found all of the notes that make up a C major scale. If you are playing a song in the key of C major, you may use these notes and these notes *only* to build chords, perform a solo, and sing. Any notes outside this key are incorrect. For example, if your band is playing a song in C major, and you sing or play an A#, you are now "out of key," "out of tune," "sour," or just plain wrong!

Let's move on to something a little bit more difficult, like the key of D major. It's always a good idea to write down the formula for the major scale until you memorize it. A good knowledge of the layout of the piano helps greatly as well…



The first letter in a D major scale is of course D. The first and second notes in the scale are separated by a whole step, so logically our next note would be E. The second and third notes are separated by a whole step as well. If you go up one whole step up from E, you end up landing on a black key.

Now would be a good time to revisit the burning question from Chapter 1…

Burning Question 1: Do we call it F# or Gb?

Burning Answer: F#

Burning Reason: Our handy checklist will always serve to keep us in line and help us deal with the ugliness of sharps and flats. Let's see what would happen to some of our rules if we decided to call that note Gb instead of F#...

RULE #1 - You must use every letter of the musical alphabet – **VIOLATED!**

> We have just skipped over the letter F and left it for dead. The musical alphabet does NOT read A B C D E G A under any circumstances.

RULE #2 - All letters must be in order – **VIOLATED!**

> The F is out of order. G does not follow E in the alphabet, or the music alphabet.

Burning Question: But both spellings refer to the SAME NOTE, does it REALLY matter?

Burning Answer: YES! YES! **YES!!**

Burning Reason: Spelling in music is very similar to spelling in English. Let's say I take the word "the" and I decide to respell it to my liking by replacing the "t" with a "u." My new spelling for the word "the" will now read "uhe." You'll be sure to fail every spelling test (and music theory test) if you simply use spellings that suit your mood.

Okay, let's recap our current findings of the D major scale…

D **E** **F#** 4 5 6 7 8

So now let's find our fourth note in the scale that is a half step above our third note F#...

1	2	**3**	**4**	5	6	7	8
	W	W	**H**	W	W	W	H

The note that is a half step up from F# is G, therefore G is our fourth note in the key of D major. Moving along, let's look at our fifth note in the scale…

1	2	3	**4**	**5**	6	7	8
	W	W	H	**W**	W	W	H

A whole step up from G (our fourth note) is A. Therefore, A is the fifth note in the key of D major. Onwards to the sixth note in the scale…

1	2	3	4	**5**	**6**	7	8
	W	W	H	W	**W**	W	H

We see that the next note is a whole step up from our fifth note, which is A. One whole step up from A is B. B is the sixth note in the key of D major. Now for our seventh note, and final whole step…

1	2	3	4	5	**6**	**7**	8
	W	W	H	W	W	**W**	H

Before I just give you the answer, it's time for a…

POP QUIZ!

The seventh note in the scale is a whole step up from the sixth note. If the sixth note is B, what is the seventh note?

a. Db
b. C#
c. B#
d. C

Turn the page for the answer…

If you answered **a. Db**, then you are WRONG! You have violated rules 1, 2, and 4 for building scales. Check, and double check your work!

If you answered **c. B#,** then you are WRONG! You have violated rules 1, 2, and 3 for building scales. Check, and double-check your work!

If you answered **d. C**, then you are WRONG! Although you have followed every rule, C is not a whole step up from B, it is a *half step*. Study the layout of the piano and take note of which keys are not separated by black keys.

If you answered **b. C#,** then you are CORRECT! You have followed all of the rules, and you'll be just fine!

Now on to the final note which is a half step above our seventh note…

1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	**8**
	W	W	H	W	W	W	**H**

If the seventh note is C#, then the next and final note must be D. You have now completed the D major scale, which looks like this…

D E F# G A B C# D

Notice how this scale started and ended with the same note just like our C major scale did. All of your scales should start and end with the same note. If you end on a different note than what you started on, its time to go back and double check what you have done.

HOMEWORK *(answers are in the back of the book)*

1. You will now figure out all of the following major scales starting on each of the given notes…

C, Db, D, Eb, E, F, F#, Gb, G, Ab, A, Bb, and B.

2. You will now find the significance of the scales being written in the following order, this knowledge will come in handy in later chapters…

C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb

3. Two of the scales share an enharmonic spelling, which two are they? Is there is significance in the number of sharps and/or flats those two scales have?

These 13 scales will be all of the major scales you will ever use. Figure them out, write them down, memorize them, and play them! I cannot stress the importance of understanding the major scale!

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION TO BUILDING CHORDS

--- KEY TERMS ---

Chord – Any combination of 3 more different notes played at the same time.

Harmony – A combination of notes that when played together, produces a pleasing effect.

Chord Progression – A series of chords, played one right after the other.

Consonant – Pleasing to the ear.

Dissonant – Not pleasing to the ear.

Interval – The distance between two notes.

If your songs consist of one note at a time, chances are your career will be short lived. The masters of music have mastered the art of *harmony*. They have taken the liberty of developing a science that will answer the following questions…

1. How do you know which notes sound good when played together?
2. How can you build chords without an instrument?
3. How do you know which chords will sound good when played in a progression?

Knowing the answers to these questions will exponentially increase your ability to write music by yourself and with other people. There are a few basic types of chords that are used most often in music…

WORKS BY KYLE MORRISON LOVELY

How To Rock: The Ultimate Guide To Making It Big In The Music Business
http://www.howtorock.net

Music Theory For The Modern Rockin' Metalhead: Write Better Songs, Right Now!
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